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# The Chat

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SPRING 2011

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# THE CHAT

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SPRING 2011

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## General Field Notes

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## General Field Notes

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*General Field Notes briefly report such items as rare sightings, unusual behaviors, significant nesting records, or summaries of such items.*

*First, second, or third sightings of species in either state must be submitted to the appropriate Bird Records Committee prior to publication in The Chat.*

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### First North Carolina Record of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*)

**Bob Holmes**

4003 Trent Pines Drive, New Bern, NC 28562

On the late afternoon of 31 August 2009, I was birding at a sod farm north of New Bern in Craven County, NC. The day was overcast with a 5–10 mph wind from the northeast. This farm, for the most part, is covered by closely-mowed grass and has multiple shallow rainwater pools.

Shorebirds seen that day were Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*), Lesser Yellowlegs (*Tringa flavipes*), Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*), Least Sandpiper (*Calidris minutilla*), and dowitcher sp. (*Limnodromus* sp.). When a Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*) was spotted on the edge of a pool, the day seemed a success. Further scanning, however, revealed a strikingly-plumaged shorebird, which I had previously seen only in photographs. It was immediately apparent to me that this was a juvenile Sharp-tailed Sandpiper (*Calidris acuminata*).

I studied the bird as it walked and fed for about fifteen minutes, using a 20–60 x 82 scope at a distance of about 35 meters. Then the flock of birds spontaneously flushed. The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was not seen again. Efforts to relocate it the following morning and afternoon were unsuccessful.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was observed standing in grass just tall enough to make determination of leg length (for comparison to a Pectoral Sandpiper) difficult. Leg color, however, could be discerned and was yellowish green, not yellow. The bill was straight and appeared uniformly dark. The cap was bright rufous. There was a narrow eye ring. The white superciliary line not only broadened behind the eye but also blended into a whitish area on the side of the head posterior to the eye. I have only seen this feature in figure 3, page 295, of O'Brien et al. (2006). The throat was white, and the breast was a bright but rather pale chestnut (not buff) with a bit of very fine dark streaking. The covert edges were mostly bright rufous. The terminal edges of the scapulars and lateral mantle were white, creating the appearance of streaks. The angles at which the bird was seen did not allow

observation of the tail shape or of the undertail coverts. No vocalization from this bird was separated from the calls of the other shorebirds when the flock flushed. Unfortunately, a camera was not available at the time of this sighting. The bird that I observed is nearly identical to the published photograph of a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in figure 2, page 294, of O'Brien, et al. (2006).

The two species most likely to be misidentified as a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper are Ruff (*Philomachus pugnax*) in juvenal plumage and Pectoral Sandpiper. The Ruff's larger size, longer legs, and slender neck should set it apart from a Sharp-tailed Sandpiper, no matter the plumage of the latter. Though reference books often consider the Sharp-tailed Sandpiper to be quite similar to a Pectoral Sandpiper, in my opinion the bird that I observed was similar to a Pectoral only in regard to size and shape.

The Sharp-tailed Sandpiper occurs uncommonly but regularly as a migrant (particularly in the fall) on the Pacific coast of North America, where migrants are predominantly juveniles. It is of much rarer occurrence on the Atlantic coast, where there is a larger percentage of adult migrants. The extreme dates for fall migrants on the Atlantic coast were 12 August (Florida) to 5 November (Massachusetts) for juveniles and 30 June (Massachusetts) to 24 September (Virginia) for adults (Mlodinow 2001).

The first record of Sharp-tailed Sandpiper in the Carolinas was an adult seen in Orangeburg County, SC, on 24 July 1994 (Carter and Eastman 1998). The Craven County bird I observed is the first of the species to be reported in North Carolina. Interestingly, a year later, on 15 October 2010, another Sharp-tailed Sandpiper was seen and photographed in North Carolina (LeGrand et al. 2011). Both records were accepted by the NC Bird Records Committee in 2010 (LeGrand et al. 2011), and because the latter record contained photos that were accepted, the species has been placed on the state's Official List.

### Literature Cited

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- Mlodinow, S. G. 2001. Possible anywhere: Sharp-tailed Sandpiper. *Birding* 33:330–341.
- O'Brien, M., R. Crossley, and K. Karlson. 2006. *The Shorebird Guide*. Houghton Mifflin Company.

## BRIEFS FOR THE FILES

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(All dates Winter 2010–2011, unless otherwise noted)

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*Briefs for the Files is a seasonal collection of uncommon-to-rare or unusual North and South Carolina bird sightings and events which do not necessarily require a more detailed Field Note or article. Reports of your sightings are due the 20th of the month after the end of the previous season.*

Winter	December 1–February 28	due March 20
Spring	March 1–May 31	due June 20
Summer	June 1–July 31	due August 20
Fall	August 1–November 30	due December 20

*Reports may be submitted in any format, but I prefer that you use email, list multiple sightings in taxonomic order (rather than by date or location), and type your report directly into the body of the email. If your sightings are in a file, please copy-and-paste the text into the body of the email, rather than sending an attachment.*

*Suitable reports for the Briefs include any sightings you feel are unusual, rare, noteworthy, or just plain interesting to you in any way! It is my responsibility to decide which reports merit inclusion in the Briefs.*

*Please be sure to include details of any rare or hard-to-identify birds.*

*I rely in part on sightings reported in Carolinabirds. Please don't, however, rely on me to pick up your sightings from Carolinabirds. Instead, please also send your sightings directly to me as described above.*

*If I feel that your sighting warrants a Field Note, I will contact either you or the appropriate state Field Notes editor. You may, of course, submit your Field Note directly to the editor without going through me.*

**Greater White-fronted Goose:** At Santee NWR, SC, 15 were seen during the Christmas Bird Count (CBC), 23 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe), and 18 were seen on 31 Jan (Aaron Given). In the NC mountains, a flock of six, first seen on the pond at Deerlake in Brevard, NC, 18 Feb (Tom Joyce), grew to a flock of ten birds when found at the Water Treatment Plant (WTP) off NC-191 near Mills River, Henderson Co, NC, 19 Feb (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey), continuing until at least 12 Mar (Forsythe, m. obs.). Interestingly,

only one report was made from the eastern half of NC—two seen flying overhead at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, 16 Jan (Ricky Davis).

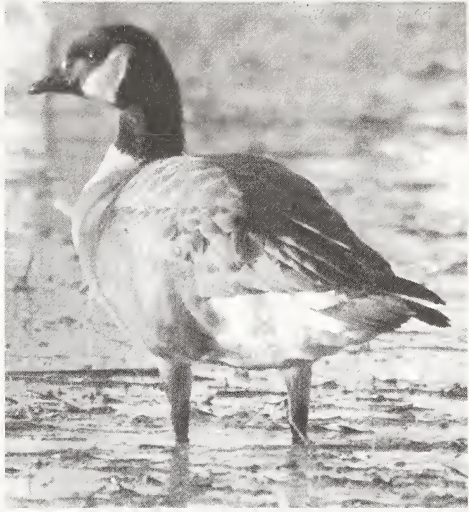
**Snow Goose:** In the mountains, where historically rare and irregular, a Snow Goose (white morph) was seen at the VanWingerden Pond off NC-191, near Mills River, Henderson Co, NC, 20 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey), and two blue-phase birds were seen at the nearby WTP, 23 Feb (Forsythe). In the piedmont, sightings included a juvenile at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, 5–18 Dec (Paul Serridge); a blue-morph bird on a pond off I-85 near Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 18 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); and two blue-morph birds with a flock of Canada Geese in a field just E of Clayton, NC, 25 Dec (Clyde Sorenson).



Three rare geese, Greater White-fronted Geese, Ross's Goose, and blue-morph Snow Goose, 28 Feb 2011, Henderson Co, NC. Photo by Wayne Forsythe.

**Ross's Goose:** Two were seen at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, a site favorable for sightings in years past, 16 Jan (Ricky Davis) and four were seen in flight with Snow Geese between Pungo Lake and Lake Phelps, 27 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand). One was seen in flight with Snow Geese over Oregon Inlet, NC, 28 Jan (John Fussell, et al.). In the NC mountains, two were found at the VanWingerden Pond off NC-191 near Mills River, Henderson Co, 20 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey), and individuals were seen on a nearby pond on Bryson Rd, 17 Feb (Forsythe), and at the nearby WTP, 28 Feb (Forsythe). Three were recorded on the Southern Lake Norman, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (Taylor Piephoff, David Wright, et al.) with one continuing near Davidson, NC, through 25 Dec (m. obs.) and another near UNC Charlotte through 10 Feb (Kevin Metcalf). In SC, one was seen on the lake at Furman University, 19–20 Dec (Anne Baker).

**Cackling Goose:** Individuals were found at Pea Island NWR, NC, during the CBC, 28 Dec (Ali Iyoob, et al.); at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, 16 Jan (Ricky Davis); on Lake Junaluska, NC, 22 Jan (Connie & Stan Wulkowicz, Bob Olthoff); and at a nearby golf course in Maggie Valley, 30 Jan (Wulkowicz). Four were seen at a large pond on the S side of US-64 between Roper and Creswell, NC, 27 Jan (Michael McCloy, David McCloy) and at least one remained 13 Feb (Harry LeGrand).



Cackling Goose, 28 Dec 2010, Pea Is NWR.  
Photo by Ali Iyoob.

**Wood Duck:** The 556 seen in dawn flight over Seven Bridges Rd, N of Rocky Mount, NC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (Brian Bockhahn), must have been an interesting sight.

**Eurasian Wigeon:** One, first seen in November, continued on Bodie Island, NC, lighthouse pond, 7 Dec (Aaron Steed). Two males were seen at Bear Island WMA, SC, 22 Jan (Carlos Sanchez). One was seen at Goose Creek Game Land in Craven Co, NC, 24 Jan (Matt Gould).

**American Black Duck:** Locally unusual were three, two males and one female, in the company of Mallards on the Tuckaseegee River, near Bryson City, NC, 22 Feb (Mike McCloy).

**Mallard x American Black Duck hybrid:** An individual was seen around N Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 19 Dec, and again 22 Jan (Brian Bockhahn).

**Canvasback:** Some of the higher counts away from the coast were 18 at the Savannah River Site, Barnwell Co, SC, 16 Dec through 14 Feb (Peter Stangel); 80 on Lake Phelps, NC, 5 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd); 110 on Harris Lake, NC, 17 Jan (Joseph Covington); and 300 on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 27 Feb (Frank Enders). Two seen on a flooded golf course near Etowah, Henderson Co, NC, 2-3 Dec (Todd Arcos, Wayne Forsythe) were considered locally unusual.

**Greater Scaup:** The total of 123 seen on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, during the CBC, 3 Jan (Brian Bockhahn) was a record number for that count.

**Common Eider:** One, a first-year male seen during the Pamlico Co, NC, CBC, 15 Dec (Al Gamache, et al.) was a first for that count. Ten (one adult male, three juvenile males, and six females) were counted flying S along the beach with scoters in Kitty Hawk, NC, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis). Up to six were

seen on the Pamlico Sound at the N end of Ocracoke Island, NC, 27–31 Dec (Jeff Beane, John Finnegan, Stephanie Horton). Three juvenile males found near the jetty at Fort Macon, Atlantic Beach, NC, 7 Jan (Scott Winton, Jacob Socolar, James Meehan), were joined by a female 9 Jan (John Fussell), and all four remained through at least mid-February (Fussell, m. obs.). A juvenile seen at the Masonboro Inlet jetty at Wrightsville Beach, NC, 25 Dec (Sam Cooper) and 1 Jan (Ricky Davis) was joined by an adult male, 13 Feb (Bruce Smithson).

**Surf Scoter:** Inland sightings included ten on the Beaverdam arm of Falls Lake, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) and individuals on Lake Hickory, NC, 15 Dec (Dwayne Martin) and Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Jan (Derb Carter).



White-winged Scoter, 11 Feb 2011,  
Henderson Co, NC. Photo by Wayne  
Forsythe.

**White-winged Scoter:** Eight seen on Jordan Lake, NC, 23 Jan (Derb Carter), and 12 counted at the same site, 26 Jan (Ali Iyob, Mike McCloy), provided an impressive inland count. In the mountains, one was photographed in the Dana area of Henderson Co, NC, 11 Feb (Wayne Forsythe), interestingly, on the same small pond where one was found in 2004.

**Black Scoter:** The only inland report was of an individual on the Beaverdam arm of Falls Lake, NC, 10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn) through 2 Jan (Ali Iyob), and off nearby Sandling

Beach, 19–22 Jan (Bockhahn).

**Long-tailed Duck:** A female obliged birders with good looks at the Garden City Pier in Murrells Inlet, SC, 14 Dec (Ritch Lilly) through at least 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill). One was seen at the jetty at Oregon Inlet, NC, during the CBC, 28 Dec (Brian Bockhahn), and two were seen nearby, just inside the inlet, NC, 29 Jan (Harry LeGrand, m. obs.). Inland sightings included five on Falls Lake, NC, seen from Sandling Beach, 22 Jan (Brian Bockhahn), and individuals on Jordan Lake, NC, 24–25 Jan (Thierry Besançon, m. obs.), and at the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 25 Jan (Ali Iyob).

**Common Goldeneye:** Inland sightings included a female on a borrow pit pond along NC-97 in Edgecombe Co, NC, 17 Dec (Ricky Davis); two on Falls Lake, NC, during the Durham CBC, 19 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); and five females on Jordan Lake, NC, from the Seaforth access, 24–26 Jan (Thierry Besançon, m. obs.). The total of 15 counted on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (John Fussell, *fide* Jeff Lewis) was a record number for that count.

**Common Merganser:** Locally unusual was one found in Columbia, SC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (John Grego); two on the Southern Lake Norman, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff), with three there 23 Jan (Kevin Metcalf); one seen from the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, during

the CBC, 29 Dec (Jeff Lewis); and two on Jordan Lake, NC, from the Seaforth access, 28 Feb (Ali Iyoob). On Lake Phelps, NC, one of the more reliable spots in our region to find this species, 15 were counted on 5 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd) and four were seen there 27 Jan (Harry LeGrand, Mike McCloy).

**Red-breasted Merganser:** Inland sightings were of three females on Falls Lake, NC, from Rolling View access, 18 Dec (Harry LeGrand) and two on Mountain Island Lake in Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 19 Dec (Tom Sanders, et al.).

**Red-throated Loon:** One on Roanoke Rapids Lake, NC, 27 Feb (Frank Enders) was the only inland sighting reported.

**Pacific Loon:** Sightings were made from several NC beaches this winter. Individuals were found on the ocean off the Sheraton pier in Atlantic Beach, NC, 19 Dec (Mike Tove), providing the second record for the Morehead City CBC; off Carolina Beach, 1 Jan (Ricky Davis); off Wrightsville Beach, 1 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); and N of Avon, NC, 2 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd). On the boundaries of our region, individuals were seen again this winter near the Richard B. Russell Dam, SC/GA border, 21–22 Dec (Mark McShane), and on Kerr Lake, from Palmer Point, NC/VA border, 25 Dec (Adam D’Onofrio) and 4 Jan (Brian Bockhahn).

**Red-necked Grebe:** On inland lakes, sightings of individuals were made on Mountain Island Lake, at Latta Plantation, Mecklenburg Co, NC, during the Southern Lake Norman CBC, 19 Dec (Tom Sanders); on Roanoke Rapids Lake, during the CBC, 3 Jan (Brian Bockhahn, Ali Iyoob); and on the Beaverdam arm of Falls Lake, NC, 19 Jan (Bockhahn, Iyoob). On the ocean, individuals were seen off Kill Devil Hills, NC, 29 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand) and just N of Avon, NC, 30 Jan (Carter, LeGrand, Ricky Davis).

**Eared Grebe:** On the ocean, singles were found near the base of the jetty at Masonboro Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 1 Jan (John Brunjes, Sam Cooper, Ricky Davis); and on the ocean with Horned Grebes, from the Sheraton Pier in Atlantic Beach, NC, 6 Jan (Bob Holmes, John Fussell). At the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, an annual wintering site, a high count of 13 was made 30 Dec (Steve Calver).

**Western Grebe:** Five were seen together on the ocean off Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 4 Feb (Brian Patteson) and were photographed 13 Feb (Jeff Lemons).



Western Grebes, 13 Feb 2011, Buxton, NC. Photo by Jeff Lemons.

**Northern Fulmar:** One seen off Hatteras, NC, 22 Dec (Kate Sutherland, *fide* Brian Patteson) was the only fulmar mentioned this winter.

**Great Shearwater:** One seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) was unusual for the mid-winter season.

**Sooty Shearwater:** Individuals seen on pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, 11–12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.) were also unusual for the season.

**Manx Shearwater:** Eleven were counted around the shelf break off Hatteras, NC, 22 Dec (Brian Patteson). One was seen 10 miles SSE of Beaufort Inlet, NC, 4–5 Jan (John Fussell, John Voigt). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, seven were seen 28 Jan, and six were seen 6 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Wood Stork:** Six lingered on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, SC, until at least 12 Dec (Paul Serridge). Two seen off Big Woods Rd, Jordan Lake, NC, 29 Jan (Norm Budnitz, Robert Meehan) were an amazing find for an inland site in mid-winter. A juvenile seen in Sunset Beach, NC, 3 Feb (Kurt Hugelmeyer) and 12 Feb (John Ennis) was unusually early.

**Great Cormorant:** Individuals were reported from Oregon Inlet, NC, 6 Dec (Steve Ritt) through 29 Jan (Harry LeGrand, m. obs.); near the jetty in Murrells Inlet, SC, 15 Dec (Paul Serridge) through 19 Dec (Michael Bernard); on the Kitty Hawk, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis); at Masonboro Inlet, Wrightsville Beach, NC, 25 Dec (Sam Cooper); at the Salt Pond, Cape Point, Buxton, NC, photographed 27 Dec (Brian Patteson); and in flight off Holden Beach, NC, 17 Jan (Taylor Piephoff).

**Anhinga:** One in Lenoir Co, NC, 13 Feb (Ali Iyoob) was somewhat early.

**American White Pelican:** Some of the more impressive winter high counts included 52 on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 16 Dec (Paul Serridge); 47 at the Davis Impoundment in Davis, NC; during the winter (*vide* John Fussell); 12 near Morehead City, NC, 21–23 Jan (Rosemary & Tony D'Andrea, Fussell, Paula Gillikin); and 27 on the Pamlico Sound, NC, from the Cedar Island Ferry, 17 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Least Bittern:** Three males, two photographed, were found at Mackay Island NWR, NC, 29 Jan (Allen Bryan), providing important wintering documentation for this species.

**Reddish Egret:** One found at Litchfield Beach, SC, during the CBC, 30 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill) was the only one mentioned this winter.

**Cattle Egret:** In Carteret Co, NC, two were seen in Beaufort, 2–9 Jan (Dick Barmore, et al.), and one was seen in Mill Creek, 13–14 Jan (Jack Fennell). Two were seen at the sod farm in Bucksport, SC, 4 Jan (Jack Peachey). One was seen in Mesic, NC, 24 Jan (Matt Gould).

**Green Heron:** Three seen on the Morehead City, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (*vide* John Fussell) tied the previous high number for that count. Fussell theorizes that freezing temperatures prior to the count “forced birds into sites where they would be more conspicuous.” One found on Small Creek in Ocracoke, NC, during the CBC, 31 Dec (Jeff Beane, et al.) was a good find for such a northern site.

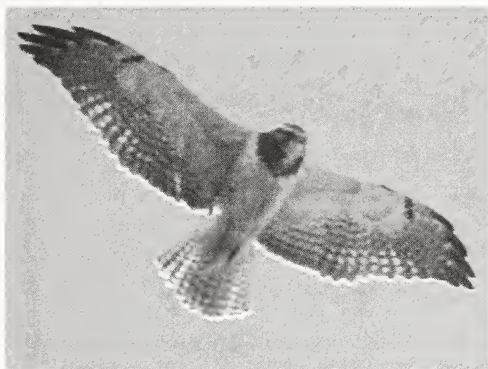
**Glossy Ibis:** More than 30 seen around the refuge ponds at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 28 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand) provided an excellent mid-winter count of this species.

**Black Vulture:** Two well-seen in a field just N of the Bodie Island, NC, lighthouse pond, 8 Feb (John Haire) were locally unusual.

**Cooper's Hawk:** The 14 on the Morehead City, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* John Fussell) were a record number for that count. Fussell notes that numbers of Cooper's Hawks continue to increase in that area.

**Northern Goshawk:** One was reported from private property in DeBordieu Colony, Georgetown Co, SC, in mid-January (Bob Manuel).

**Broad-winged Hawk:** One was well-studied in Aiken, SC, 19 Jan (David Abbott) providing a rare mid-winter report.



Swainson's Hawk, 30 Jan 2011, Alligator River NWR. Photo by Kent Fiala.

**Swainson's Hawk:** An individual thought to be a second-year juvenile, was seen and photographed by many birders throughout the winter at Alligator River NWR, NC. Some observers reported two Swainson's Hawks at the site, both an adult and a juvenile, and two were recorded on the CBC, 4 Jan (*fide* Jeff Lewis). At least one remained until 20 Feb (Jeff Pippen).

**Rough-legged Hawk:**

The bird found along N Rugby Rd in Henderson Co, NC, 25 Nov (Steve Ritt) remained throughout the winter and was seen and photographed by many birders. One found near the airport in Charlotte, NC, 29 Dec (Kevin Metcalf) was joined by a second bird on 30 Dec (Ron Clark), and up to two were seen throughout January (m. obs.). A light-morph adult was seen over the fields N of Pungo Lake, NC, 16 Jan (Ricky Davis) and again 27 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand). Another individual was seen in a field 3 miles SW of Belhaven, NC, 27 Jan (Sam Cooper) and 29 Jan (John Ennis, m. obs.).

**Golden Eagle:** An adult was seen at Santee Coastal Reserve, SC, 19 Dec (Michael Bernard) and 12 Feb (*fide* Jeff Click). Notably, none were reported in NC this winter.

**Merlin:** Inland sightings included individuals near Clemson, SC 18 Dec (Steve Kilpatrick); at Jordan Lake, NC, 2 Jan (Rob Aldredge, et al.); at Falls Lake, NC, from Sandling Beach, 5 Jan (Brian Bockhahn); in Henderson Co, NC, 9 Jan (Wayne Forsythe); in Brevard, NC, 2 Feb (Betty McIlwain); and along Beckham Swamp Rd in Richland Co, SC, 6 Feb (John Grego).



Merlin, 18 Dec 2010, Clemson, SC. Photo by Steve Kilpatrick.

**Peregrine Falcon:** Individuals wintered again in the downtown areas of Charlotte, NC, for a fifth winter (Anne Clark); Winston-Salem, NC (John Haire); and Anderson, SC, for perhaps a third winter (David Fleischman).

**Yellow Rail:** Singles were flushed at North River Marsh, Carteret Co, NC, 7 Jan (Scott Winton, Jacob Socolar) and in a wetland restoration area at nearby North River Farms, 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould).

**Black Rail:** One was seen at the Bodie Island, NC, lighthouse pond, during the CBC, 28 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Matt Daw, Ali Iyoob, Kyle Kittelberger).

**King Rail:** More than 18 at Mackay Island NWR, NC, 15 Jan (Allen Bryan) were a quite impressive count.

**Sora:** One seen feeding under the feeder outside the visitor center at Pea Island NWR, NC, in early

January (Jeff Lewis) continued long enough to delight Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting participants, 27–30 Jan (m. obs.).

**Common Moorhen:** Individuals at Goose Creek Game Land, Craven Co, NC, 24 Jan (Matt Gould); and at North River Golf Course, Carteret Co, NC, 9 Feb (John Fussell) were unusual for mid-winter.

**Sandhill Crane:** Birders found this species from the mountains to the coast this winter. One photographed in flight near the dam on Falls Lake, NC, 6 Dec (Ali Iyoob) was a first for the lake. A flock of 19 birds was seen by multiple participants of the Buncombe Co, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (James Poling, Rick Pyeritz, Steve Semanchuk), and at least one remained in the Sandy Mush Gamelands from early January through the end of the period (Gail Lankford, Doug Johnston). A good count of 34 was made at Santee NWR, SC, 29 Jan (Sparkle Clark). In Carteret Co, NC, two were seen at the airport in Beaufort, 28 Jan (Rich & Susan Boyd) and 29 Jan (Jeannie Kraus); and three were seen in a wetland restoration area at North River Farms, 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould). One was seen in flight over a grassy bald in Watauga Co, NC, 2 Feb (Phil Dickinson). One found in E Yadkin Co, NC, 11 Feb (Marilyn Westphal, Mark Simpson) was seen until at least 15 Feb, straying into nearby Forsyth Co, NC (John Haire, Dickinson). Three were seen in the Mills River area of Henderson Co, NC,



Sora, 30 Jan 2011, Pea Is NWR, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

15 Feb (Wayne Forsythe) where apparently the birds had been seen for at least a week prior, and remained until late February (Forsythe).

**Wilson's Plover:** For the first time in several years, John Fussell noted no Wilson's Plovers in the Beaufort Inlet area this winter.

**Piping Plover:** Ten on the Holly Shelter & Lea-Hutaff Island, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (*vide* Andy Wood) provided a good mid-winter count.

**Black-necked Stilt:** An individual apparently wintered at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, seen 2 Jan, 10 Feb, and 18 Feb (Steve Calver).

**American Avocet:** The high count at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, was 490, 18 Feb (Steve Calver). CBC participants made noteworthy counts of 266 in Winyah Bay, SC, 16 Dec (*vide* Lex Glover); 69 in the ACE Basin, SC, 26 Dec (*vide* David Chamberlain); 88 on Bodie / Pea Island, NC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes); and 10 at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan). A count of 135 was made at Bear Island WMA, SC, 18 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**Spotted Sandpiper:** One seen on the Haw River spillway, just upstream from Saxapahaw, Alamance Co, NC, 8 Dec (Steve Ritt) was quite late. One lingered on Mullet Pond at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 12 Dec (Paul Serridge, et al.) through at least 2 Jan (Jack Peachey).

**Purple Sandpiper:** Some of the better counts were eight on a rock groin at Breach Inlet, Sullivan's Island, SC, 27 Dec (John Cox); 32 on the Wilmington, NC, CBC, 1 Jan (*vide* Sam Cooper); 20 at the Little River Inlet, NC/SC border, 6 Jan (Chris Snook); and seven on the groin at Fort Macon in Atlantic Beach, NC, 7 Jan (Jacob Socolar, Scott Winton, James Meehan).

**Long-billed Dowitcher:** More than 30 were seen at Vereen Park, Horry Co, SC, near the NC border, 14 Jan (Monroe Pannell, Jim York), and 30

were seen along River Rd in Alligator River NWR, 27 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand).

**Wilson's Snipe:** A remarkable 335 were tallied on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Jan (*vide* Jeff Lewis), providing a new high count for that CBC. In the fields next to Coastal Grand Mall in Myrtle Beach, SC, 80 were counted after heavy rain, 6 Feb (Richard & Dorothy Rosche).

**Red Phalarope:** 200 were seen approximately 40 miles SSE of Beaufort Inlet, NC, "along a sharp water temperature change" 4 Jan (John Fussell, John Voigt). Also notable was an individual only 10 miles SSE of Beaufort Inlet, 5 Jan (Fussell).

**Black-legged Kittiwake:** A first-winter bird was seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 3 Jan (Brian Patteson) and two, an adult and a first-winter bird, were seen there 4 Jan (Patteson). Another adult was seen on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 28 Jan (Patteson, et al.).

**Black-headed Gull:** One seen on the Beaverdam arm of Falls Lake, NC, 9–10 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, m. obs.) provided NC with only its second sighting outside of the coastal plain. On the NC Outer Banks, an adult was seen on the beach in Avon, 29 Jan (John Fussell); a first-winter bird was seen on the beach in Kitty Hawk, 2 Feb (Brian Patteson); and an adult was seen in an urban area of Kill Devil Hills, 3–6 Feb (Peggy Eubank, Jeff Lewis). Three, two adults and one first-winter bird, were seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 4 Feb (Patteson).

**Little Gull:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, sightings totaled five on 28 Jan; three on 6 Feb; and six on 11 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). From shore, an adult was seen flying over the breakers, with Bonaparte's Gulls, just N of Avon, NC, 30 Jan (Ricky Davis, Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand); and up to eight were seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 4 Feb (Patteson).

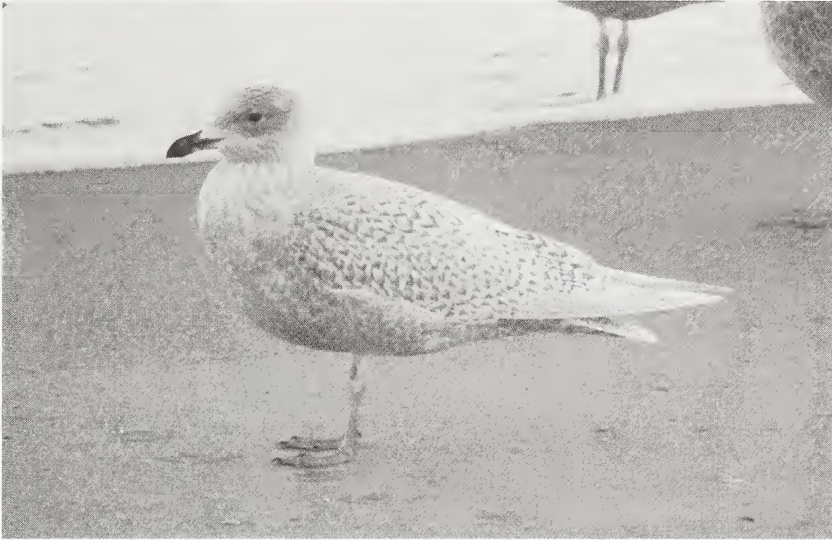
**Laughing Gull:** Unusual mid-winter sightings included a winter-plumaged adult at a borrow pit pond along NC-97 in Edgecombe Co, NC, 17 Dec and 20 Jan (Ricky Davis); four on the tip of Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 18 Jan (Brian Patteson); one on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 6 Feb (Patteson, et al.); and one first-winter bird on the Pamlico Sound, NC, from the Ocracoke to Swan Quarter ferry, 6 Feb (Haven Wiley, et al.).

**California Gull:** Two sightings were made at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, where a near-adult was seen 18 Jan (Brian Patteson) and an adult was seen 4 Feb (Patteson).

**Thayer's Gull:** A bird reported as a first-winter Thayer's Gull was seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 6 Feb (Haven Wiley) and 7 Feb (John Haire, Pat & Neal Moore).

**Iceland Gull:** First-winter individuals were found on the N end of Ocracoke Island, NC, 28 Dec (Jeff Beane); in Myrtle Beach, SC, photographed 31 Dec (Eric & Celia Dean); around the harbor in Charleston, SC, 5 Feb through the end of the period (*vide* David Abbott); at the landfill in Horry Co, SC, 11 Feb (Chris Hill); and along the Neuse River in New Bern, NC, 27 Feb (Al Gamache). At Cape Point, Buxton, NC, a first-winter bird, first seen 4 Jan (Brian Patteson) was joined by a second bird, 30 Jan (Ricky

Davis, Derby Carter, Harry LeGrand) and a total of five birds were seen 2 Feb (Patteson). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, two to four first-winter birds were seen on each trip in early to mid-February (Patteson, et al.). One seen on Lake Crabtree, NC, 8 Jan (Jacob Socolar, Ali Iyooob) was a great find for a site so far inland.



Iceland Gull, 31 Dec 2010, Myrtle Beach, SC. Photo by Celia Dean.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull:** The 27, including 19 adults, counted amongst a mixed-gull flock at a borrow pit pond along NC-97 in Edgecombe Co, NC, 20 Jan (Ricky Davis) were quite a large number for an inland site.

**Glaucous Gull:** A first-winter bird with brown wingtips, thought to be a “Nelson’s Gull”, a Glaucous x Herring Gull hybrid, was seen at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 4 Jan (Brian Patteson) through the end of the period (m. obs.). A first-winter bird was photographed at the landfill in Horry Co, SC, 31 Jan (Chris Hill).

**Great Skua:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, individuals were seen 15 and 28 Jan, and at least two were seen 11–12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Pomarine Jaeger:** One seen near the shelf break off Hatteras, NC, 22 Dec (Brian Patteson), was the only one reported this winter.

**Parasitic Jaeger:** A light-morph adult was seen flying S off Ft Fisher, NC, during the Southport CBC, 2 Jan (Ricky Davis). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, individuals were seen 29 Dec and 12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Dovekie:** On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, amazing numbers were had—643 on 28 Jan; 871, a new record high count for NC, on 6 Feb; 425 on 11 Feb; and 495 on 12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.). Birders also found Dovekies from shore during this time period, including six on the ocean between Pea Island NWR and Hatteras, NC, 30 Jan (Ricky Davis, Derby

Carter, Harry LeGrand) and one at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 3 Feb (Ritch Lilly)

**Common Murre:** A pair was photographed about 12 miles SE of Hatteras Inlet, NC, 15 Jan (Brian Patteson). Individuals were also photographed during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, 28 Jan (Jeff Lemons) and near Diamond Shoals off Hatteras, 29 Jan (Patteson, Chris Sloan). Before this winter, there were only two reports of this species in NC.

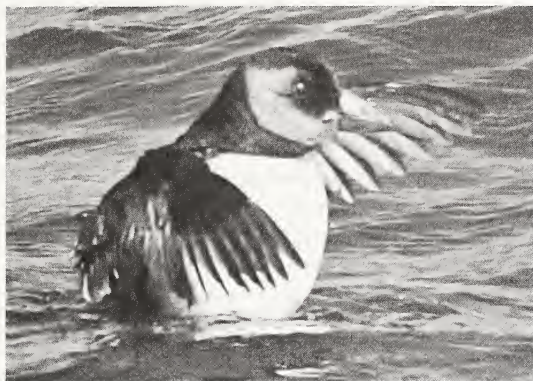


Dovekie, 28 Jan 2011, off Hatteras, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Thick-billed Murre:** One was photographed SE of Hatteras Inlet on 30 Dec (Brian Patteson).

**Razorbill:** This species began showing up in NC waters in December, with reports of 40 birds 15 miles SE of Hatteras Inlet, NC, 3 Dec (Brian Patteson) and two birds 10 miles SSE of Beaufort Inlet, NC, 21 Dec (John Fussell). In January, from-shore sightings began to be made, including two off the N end of Carolina Beach, NC, during the Wilmington CBC, 1 Jan (Ricky Davis); 25 on the ocean between S Nags Head and Pea Island NWR, NC, 28 Jan (Davis); and more than 35 between Pea Island NWR and Hatteras, NC, 30 Jan (Davis, Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand). On pelagic trips out of Hatteras, NC, the counts were quite impressive—288 on 28 Jan; 270 on 6 Feb; 425 on 11 Feb; and 133 on 12 Feb (Brian Patteson, et al.).

**Atlantic Puffin:** Nine were seen around the shelf break off Hatteras Inlet, NC, 22 Dec (Brian Patteson, Kate Sutherland) and more than 20 were in that same area, 10 Jan (Patteson). Carolina Bird Club Winter Meeting participants were delighted by 17 puffins during a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 28 Jan (Patteson, m. obs.). Counts of two were made near Diamond Shoals off Hatteras Inlet, NC, 29 Jan (Patteson, Chris Sloan) and on a pelagic trip out of Hatteras, NC, 11 Feb (Patteson, et al.).



Atlantic Puffin, 28 Jan 2011, off Hatteras, NC. Photo by Jeff Lewis.

**Eurasian Collared-Dove:** Some of the higher counts from the Outer Banks of NC were 25 in Nags Head, NC, 18 Dec (Ricky Davis) and 38 on the Ocracoke Island CBC, 31 Dec (*fide* Peter Vankevich).

**White-winged Dove:** Individuals were seen with flocks of Eurasian Collared-Doves in Nags Head, NC, 7 Dec (Peggy Eubank) through 28 Dec

(m. obs.) and in S Litchfield Beach, SC, 17 Dec (Paul Serridge) through at least 30 Dec (m. obs.). One shot by a hunter along Brickhouse Rd near Falls Lake, NC, 18 Dec (Chris Baranski) was a first for that area. One seen in a yard in Morehead City, NC, 15 Jan (John Fussell) was a one-day wonder.

**Long-eared Owl:** One was seen and heard along the entrance drive to the lighthouse at Bodie Island, NC, during the CBC, 28 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Ali Iyoob, Matt Daw, Kyle Kittelberger), a first for that count. The bird was heard again the evening of 29 Dec (Audrey Whitlock, m. obs.).

**Short-eared Owl:** One was found in an undeveloped subdivision NW of Monroe, NC, 12 Dec (Kim Garrett) and was seen by several birders through at least 17 Feb (Jeff Lemons). One was seen near the international airport in Charlotte, NC, 29 Dec through 30 Jan (Kevin Metcalf). More than 30 were estimated on private land 3 miles SE of Belhaven, NC, 13 Jan (Sam Cooper), and up to five owls continued at this site for several weeks (m. obs.). Five were counted at dusk at Alligator River NWR, NC, 27 Jan (Derb Carter, Harry LeGrand). Individuals were also reported from the W of Lake Phelps, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); in Sampson Co, NC, 6 Jan (Bockhahn); at Cape Lookout, NC, 24 Jan (Jon Altman, *fide* John Fussell); and at Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 17 Feb (Rich & Susan Boyd).

**Northern Saw-whet Owl:** Two were seen and heard along the entrance drive to the lighthouse pond at Bodie Island, NC, during the CBC, 28 Dec (Brian Bockhahn, Ali Iyoob, Matt Daw, Kyle Kittelberger) and one was heard again 27 Jan (Mike McCloy).

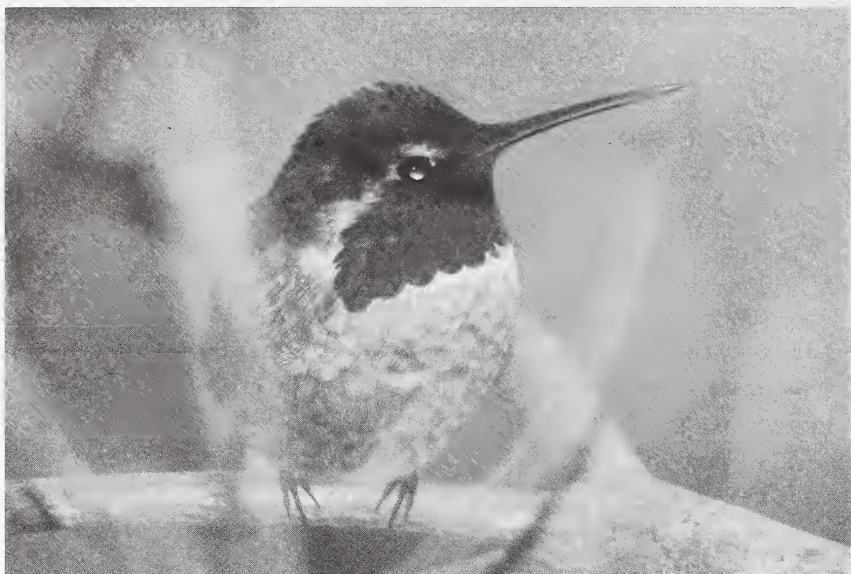
**Eastern Whip-poor-will:** One was heard pre-dawn in Kure Beach, NC, during the Southport CBC, 2 Jan (Ricky Davis) at a location where Davis heard wintering whip-poor-wills in years past.

**Ruby-throated Hummingbird:** The 36 counted on the Kitty Hawk, NC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis) were not only a record high number for that count, but also the largest total in the United States for the 111th CBC.

**Black-chinned Hummingbird:** A juvenile male was banded in a yard adjacent to Charleston Harbor in Mt Pleasant, SC, in early December

(Doreen Cubie). CBCs recorded individuals in Sun City-Okatie, SC, 14 Dec (*fide* Helen Chatterton) and in Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill).

**Anna's Hummingbird:** Individuals visited feeders in both NC and SC this winter. A female was banded in a yard in Hanahan, near Charleston, SC, 20 Dec (Pat & Jack Eckstine, Doreen Cubie) and was seen by many birders through at least 4 Jan (David Abbott). This sighting provides SC with its first record. In NC, an adult male visited a feeder in Trent Woods, near New Bern, 17 Jan (Art & Joanne Behrer, *fide* Bob Holmes, Inge Parker) and was seen by many through at least 11 Feb (Ali Iyob), providing NC with its second record.



Anna's Hummingbird, 11 Feb 2011, New Bern, NC. Photo by Ali Iyob.



Rufous Hummingbird, 5 Dec 2010, Hendersonville, NC. Wayne Forsythe.

**Rufous Hummingbird:** A male visited a feeder in Hendersonville, NC, 4 Dec through 3 Jan (Wayne Forsythe) where the bird survived temperatures well below freezing for many nights, sometimes remaining at the feeder well after sunset.

**Say's Phoebe:** The refuge manager and a wildlife biologist observed an individual at Santee NWR, SC, on the Bluff Unit, 17–19 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Ash-throated Flycatcher:** One was photographed along River Road in

Alligator River NWR, NC, 25 Dec (Edmund LeGrand) but never relocated. One wintered at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, seen 15 Jan through 1 Mar (Steve Calver).

**Loggerhead Shrike:** Locally unusual were individuals in SE Guilford Co, NC, 28 Dec (Dennis Burnette); in the Sneads Ferry area of Onslow Co, NC, 28 Jan (Buddy Garrett); and, probably the same bird, in adjacent North Topsail Beach, 6 Feb (Andy Webb). Eight around Ft Fisher and Carolina Beach, NC, 28 Jan (Daniel Hucholt) provided a good count.

**White-eyed Vireo:** Impressive CBC numbers included 20 on Hilton Head Island, SC, 14 Dec (*vide* Nan Lloyd); nine in Sun City–Okatie, SC, 14 Dec (*vide* Helen Chatterton); five in Four Holes Swamp, SC, 14 Dec (*vide* Denise Ecker); and five at Alligator River NWR, NC, 30 Dec (*vide* Jeff Lewis).

**Blue-headed Vireo:** The high counts on South Carolina CBCs were 31 in Four Holes Swamp, 14 Dec (*vide* Denise Ecker); 26 in the Congaree Swamp, 19 Dec (*vide* John Grego); and 30 in Charleston, 2 Jan (*vide* Jennifer McCarthy Tyrrell).

**Common Raven:** Two found on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (Allen Bryan, Bob Lewis) represent NCs eastern-most sighting on record. Five recorded on the Falls Lake, NC, CBC, 5 Jan (*vide* Brian Bockhahn) must have been a new one-day high count for that area.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow:** One seen on Eagle Island during the Wilmington, NC, CBC, 1 Jan (*vide* Sam Cooper) was a great mid-winter find.

**Red-breasted Nuthatch:** The 41 on the Ocracoke Island, NC, CBC, 31 Dec (*vide* Peter Vankevich) provided a new high for that count.

**Sedge Wren:** Locally unusual were two at Cowan's Ford WR in Mecklenburg Co, NC, 2 Dec (Tom Sanders, Ron Clark), with one continuing through at least 16 Jan (m. obs.); one along Seven Bridges Rd during the Rocky Mount, NC, CBC, 17 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); and one along Big Woods Rd during the Jordan Lake, NC, CBC, 2 Jan (Doug Shadwick).



**Blue-gray Gnatcatcher:** Noteworthy CBC finds included six at Four Holes

Lapland Longspur, 14 Feb 2011, Yadkin Co, NC. Photo by John Haire.

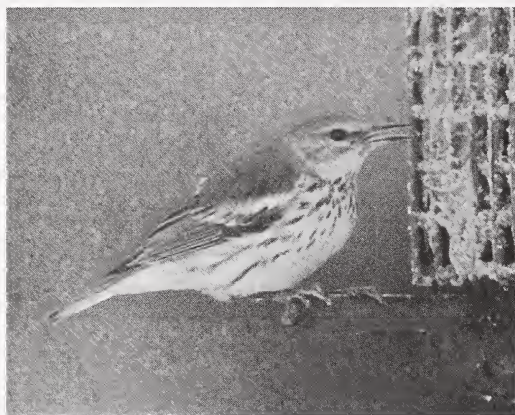
Swamp, SC, 14 Dec (*vide* Denise Ecker); two near Vandemere, Pamlico Co, NC, 15 Dec (Rich & Susan Boyd); one in Charlotte, NC, 26 Dec (*vide* Ken Kneidel); six at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); and one in Greenville, NC, 2 Jan (*vide* Veronica Pantelidis).

**Lapland Longspur:** Two were seen at Anilorac Farm, along Dairyland Rd, Orange Co, NC, 5 Dec (Derb Carter). One was seen at the base of the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 19 Dec (Michael Bernard). At least three were seen at Dinkins Bottom in E Yadkin Co, NC, 14 Feb (John Haire) through 26 Feb (m. obs.). Haire notes that he first heard them months earlier.

**Snow Bunting:** One found on the beach near the jetty at Huntington Beach SP, SC, 15 Dec (Ritch Lilly) remained through the CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill), and two were seen there 5 Jan (Jerry Kerschner). One was seen on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis). Four were seen on Cape Point, Buxton, NC, 3 Jan (Brian Patteson), six were there 3 Feb (Patteson), five were there 6 Feb (Haven Wiley, et al.), and three remained 20 Feb (Scott Baron, et al.) (see cover photo). A female flushed off Sandling Beach, Falls Lake, NC, 10 Dec (Ali Iyoob) provided the winter's only inland sighting.

**Orange-crowned Warbler:** Four on the Southern Lake Norman, NC, CBC, 19 Dec (*fide* Taylor Piephoff) was an excellent count for an area so far inland. The 18 on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill) was a record high for that count.

**Northern Parula:** One found on Lake Marion at Santee SP, SC, 21 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche) was the only one reported this winter.



Cape May Warbler, 12 Feb 2011, Winston-Salem, NC. Photo by John Schultz.

**Cape May Warbler:** An individual was photographed on a suet feeder in a yard in Winston-Salem, NC, 10 Jan (John Schultz) and was seen off-and-on through at least 26 Feb (Schultz), providing a rare wintering report.

**Yellow-throated Warbler:** One seen on a birdbath in Chatham Co, NC, 2 Dec (Terry Logue) was quite late

for such an inland site. One was seen at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 3 Dec (Allen Bryan) and again during the CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Bryan). A count of 49 on the Sun City-Okatie, SC, CBC, 14 Dec (*fide* Helen Chatterton) was the highest CBC count of this species made in the U.S. this year.

**Prairie Warbler:** A first-winter bird, seen along the basin trail at Ft Fisher, NC, 2 Dec (Aaron Steed), was somewhat late. One seen along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 3 Dec (Allen Bryan) and 13 Dec (Daniel Hueholt) was also seen the week of the CBC (*fide* Bryan). One was seen on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore). One at Federal Point, Ft Fisher, NC, 28 Jan (Hueholt) was probably a different bird from the one seen in early December.

**Black-and-white Warbler:** In NC, CBC participants found individuals on Roanoke Island during the Kitty Hawk CBC, 18 Dec (Jeff Lewis); in Southern Pines, well away from the coast, 19 Dec (*fide* Susan Campbell); in Cumberland Co, 20 Dec (Amber Williams); in Wilmington, NC, 1 Jan (*fide* Sam Cooper); and in Southport, 2 Jan (*fide* Melinda Jones). Four on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*fide* Allen Bryan) provided a good count. In SC, some of the larger CBC numbers were seven at Four Holes Swamp, 14 Dec (*fide* Denise Ecker); 12 in the Congaree Swamp, 19 Dec (*fide* John Grego); and 14 at Santee NWR, 24 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe).

**Ovenbird:** One seen eating sunflower chips on a porch railing in Emerald Isle, NC, 15 Dec (John Voigt) was especially noteworthy; wintering Ovenbirds are much harder to find on the Bogue Banks than they are on the Outer Banks. For a third straight winter, one visited a feeder in Manteo, NC, 10 Dec through the end of the period (Jeff Lewis). Four were found on the Cape Hatteras, NC, CBC, 27 Dec (*fide* Pat Moore), presumably in Buxton Woods. One was seen in Nags Head Woods, NC, 15 Feb (Scott Jackson-Ricketts, et al.).

**Northern Waterthrush:** Three were seen at the Savannah Spoil Site, Jasper Co, SC, an annual wintering site for this species, 15 and 30 Dec; two were seen 2 and 22 Jan; and one remained 18 Feb (Steve Calver). One found at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, during the CBC, 29 Dec (Allen Bryan) was a good find.

**Yellow-breasted Chat:** Individuals were found along the causeway at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 3 Dec (Allen Bryan), seen again 4 Dec (Audrey Whitlock); on the Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 23 Dec (*fide* Dennis Forsythe); on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC, CBC, 28 Dec (*fide* Paul Sykes); and on the Alligator River NWR, NC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Jeff Lewis). Two on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 30 Dec (*fide* Chris Hill) provided our region's winter high count.

**Bachman's Sparrow:** Five responded to a tape in the "sparrow fields" along Independence Dr in Wilmington, NC, during the CBC, 1 Jan (Daniel Hueholt). Nine were counted in the W Croatan NF, near Bogue, NC, 17 Feb (John Fussell, John Voigt) in an area burned in the past year or two.

**American Tree Sparrow:** This northern sparrow has become rare to absent in recent years, thus the presence of at least three individuals in the NC mountains, in late December and January, was quite surprising. The first individual was seen and photographed at a feeder in Linville Land Harbor, Avery Co, NC, 25–29 Dec (Mark Swanson). A second bird was photographed in a yard near Todd, Ashe Co, NC, 23 Dec (Martha Cutler). Two birds, one of which was possibly the same bird seen 23 Dec, were photographed at nearby Green Valley Park, near Todd, Ashe Co, NC, 15 Jan (Dwayne Martin, Doris Ratchford), and up to two remained at the site through at least 30 Jan (Keith Camburn).

**Clay-colored Sparrow:** CBCs recorded three at Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, 29 Jan (*fide* Allen Bryan); two on the W side of Lake Phelps, NC, during the Pettigrew SP CBC, 30 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); one in Greenville,



American Tree Sparrow, 26 Dec 2010, Avery Co, NC. Photo by Mark Swanson.

NC, 2 Jan (*fide* Veronica Pantelidis); and one, a first for the count, at Jordan Lake, NC, 2 Jan (Doug Shadwick). An amazing count of 16 was made at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould), providing a new high count for NC.

**Vesper Sparrow:** Reports included three N of Rocky Mount, NC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); seven at Santee NWR, SC, 20 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche); several in Meggett, SC, 24–25 Jan (Cherrie Sneed); seven in Bucksville, SC, 6 Feb (Rosche); and one at North River Farms in Carteret Co, NC, 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould).

**Lark Sparrow:** One was seen amongst a group of Chipping Sparrows at the North River Club Golf Course near Beaufort, NC, 11 Dec (John Fussell) through 19 Jan (m. obs.).

**“Ipswich” Sparrow:** Unusually far from the coast was one seen in a wetland restoration area at North River Farms, Carteret Co, 13 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould).

**Grasshopper Sparrow:** Individuals were found on the Carolina Sandhills NWR, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (*fide* Nancy Jordan); in Southport, NC, 22 Dec (Greg Massey); on the Aiken, SC, CBC, 24 Dec (*fide* Calvin Zippler); and in Washington Co, NC, 30 Dec (Ed Corey). Two were seen in a wetland restoration area at North River Farms, Carteret Co, 13 and 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould), with one remaining 27 Feb (Fussell, Fennell).



Henslow's Sparrow, 7 Jan 2011, ACE Basin NWR, SC. Photo by Steve Kilpatrick.

**Henslow's Sparrow:** CBCs reported five at the Savannah River Site, SC, 16 Dec (*vide* Mark Vukovich); two at Holly Shelter & Lea-Hutaff Island, NC, 19 Dec (*vide* Andy Wood); and one in Wilmington, NC, 1 Jan (Daniel Hueholt). One was photographed at ACE Basin NWR, SC, 7 Jan (Steve Kilpatrick). One was flushed at the Pine Island Unit at Santee NWR, SC, 31 Jan (Aaron Given, et al.). Two were found in a grassy power line corridor in the Southwest Prong Flatwoods Natural Area in the Croatan NF, near Havelock, NC, 16 Feb (John Fussell) and one was found at the same location, 26 Feb (Matt Gould). Fussell notes that this species was been found at this same site in previous winters.

**Le Conte's Sparrow:** One seen in a wetland restoration area at North River Farms, Carteret Co, 13 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould) was the only one reported this winter.

**Lincoln's Sparrow:** Individuals were found in New Bern, NC, 9 Dec (Matt Gould); off Seven Bridges Rd, N of Rocky Mount, NC, during the CBC, 17 Dec (Brian Bockhahn); on the Mattamuskeet NWR, NC, CBC, 29 Dec (*vide* Allen Bryan); at Brookgreen Gardens on the Litchfield-Pawleys Island, SC, CBC, 30 Dec (*vide* Chris Hill); and at the Pungo Unit of Pocosin Lakes NWR, NC, 16 Jan (Ricky Davis).

**Harris's Sparrow:** An adult visited a feeder N of Waterloo, Laurens Co, SC, 6 Dec (*vide* Tim Kalbach), and was seen throughout the winter season (m. obs.) and remained until at least 1 May (Lex Glover).

**White-crowned Sparrow:** At North River Farms wetland restoration area, Carteret Co, NC, 17 were seen 20 Feb (John Fussell, Jack Fennell, Matt Gould), and 18 seen there 27 Feb (Fussell, Fennell) set a new record count for Carteret County.

**Summer Tanager:** A female visited a yard in Wilmington, NC, for a third straight winter, 3 Dec through the end of the period (Amy Williamson). One also visited a feeder in Raleigh, NC, 11 Dec–7 Feb (Cathy Sue Harvey).



Harris's Sparrow, 14 Dec 2010, Laurens Co, SC.

Photo by Jerry Johnson.

**Western Tanager:** A female visited a feeder in Wilmington, NC, again this winter, albeit only briefly, 29–31 Dec (Bruce & Melinda Jones). A female was seen at Patriot Point in Mt Pleasant, SC, 8 Feb (David McLean). A male was photographed in a yard on Bald Head Island, NC, 18 Feb (Nancy Giacci).

**Indigo Bunting:** A juvenile male that visited a feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC, 5–13 Dec (Richard & Dorothy Rosche) was late to depart. A winter-plumaged male at a feeder in Florence, SC, 27 Jan (Lorraine de Montluzin)

was an extremely unusual mid-winter find.

**Painted Bunting:**

North of the species' typical range were three on the Bodie-Pea Island, NC, CBC, 28 Dec (*vide* Paul Sykes) and a male that visited a feeder in Kill Devil Hills, NC, for a second straight winter (Greg Meade).

**Dickcissel:** Individual females were seen along Shepard Rd during the Southport, NC, CBC, 2 Jan (Greg Massey); and in a yard on Lake Hartwell, Clemson, SC, 10–14 Jan (Kate Fenlon).

**Rusty Blackbird:** High counts at Lake Conestee Nature Park in Greenville, SC, were 500+ on 8 and 18 Dec (Paul Serridge).

**Brewer's Blackbird:** A pair was found on Goat Island during the Santee NWR, SC, CBC, 23 Dec (John Grego), at a site that has hosted this species before. An impressive count of 29 birds was made on the Clemson, SC, CBC, 18 Dec (*vide* Drew Lanham).

**Baltimore Oriole:** More than 20 visiting feeders in Conway, SC, 11 Dec (Gary Phillips) must have been an impressive sight.

**Red Crossbill:** Five seen along Wolf Rock Trail at Hanging Rock SP, Stokes Co, NC, during the CBC, 15 Dec (Marilyn Westphal, Bill Gifford) provided a first for that area in many years. Farther into the mountains, a pair was photographed at the Cataloochee Ski Resort in Haywood Co, NC, 23 Jan (Wayne Forsythe, Ron Selvey).



Common Redpoll, 26 Feb 2011, Graham, NC. Photo by Jeff Lemons.

**Common Redpoll:** One visited a feeder near Falls Lake, NC, 21 Feb (*fide* Brian Bockhahn), and was a first for that area, but was not relocated. One photographed at a feeder in Graham, NC, 24 Feb (Teresa Hutson), however, was seen by several birders through 26 Feb (m. obs.).

## Fifty Years Ago in *The Chat*—June 1961

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Charles Blake reviewed the distribution of towhees in the Carolinas, in response to what he considered confusion in the 1960 edition of *Birds of North Carolina*. He reported that three subspecies of Rufous-sided (now Eastern) Towhee occur in our area, but that the subspecies are not readily distinguishable in the field, and even a bander can identify only about 30% of birds in hand, mainly adult males.

*Pipilo e. erythrophthalmus* had breeding records across most of North Carolina except for the southeastern section, and in the mountains of South Carolina. Winter records were throughout the region, but with an increased number toward the coast. In this subspecies, the iris is red in adults but varies in young birds from dark brown to reddish brown.

*Pipilo e. canaster* had an NC breeding record only in Richmond Co, and a winter record only in Pitt Co. SC records were only for wintering in coastal counties, but the subspecies was presumed to breed across the piedmont. The iris color of adults is variable, ranging from red to pale orange, occasionally yellow.

*Pipilo e. rileyi* had breeding records in Brunswick, Carteret, and New Hanover Counties, NC, and Charleston and Georgetown Counties, SC. Winter records covered a slightly larger range, with a suggestion of northward movement in winter. The iris color in adults varies from straw to orange or red.

In General Field Notes, a female Dickcissel was collected in Durham, NC, on 15 Jan 1961, and a male Dickcissel was seen at a feeder in Myrtle Beach, SC in Feb and Mar 1961. The SC record was one of very few for the state. A Ruff (Reeve) sighting was reported at the entrance to the campground at Cape Hatteras lighthouse, NC, on 26 Mar 1960. Another Ruff was reported at the Savannah NWR on 22–23 Jan 1961 and was the first record for SC. Extending the list of numerous reports of Fulvous Tree Ducks (now Fulvous Whistling-Ducks) in the previous issue, there were reports from Currituck Co, NC, in Oct and Dec 1960. A female or immature male Common Eider was observed on the Wilmington 1960 Christmas Bird Count and remained through 19 Feb 1961. It was the first record for North Carolina. A Mourning Warbler was reported near Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest on 16 May 1960. This was the first spring record for the state.

In Briefs for the Files, a singing male Bachman's Warbler was reported in Charleston Co, SC, on 19 Mar 1961, considered an early date.

# CAROLINA BIRD CLUB

[www.carolinabirdclub.org](http://www.carolinabirdclub.org)

The Carolina Bird Club is a non-profit organization which represents and supports the birding community in the Carolinas through its official website, publications, meetings, workshops, trips, and partnerships, whose mission is

- To promote the observation, enjoyment, and study of birds.
- To provide opportunities for birders to become acquainted, and to share information and experience.
- To maintain well-documented records of birds in the Carolinas.
- To support the protection and conservation of birds and their habitats and foster an appreciation and respect of natural resources.
- To promote educational opportunities in bird and nature study.
- To support research on birds of the Carolinas and their habitats.

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Secretary	Phil Fowler, Concord, NC	<a href="mailto:janmfowler@gmail.com">janmfowler@gmail.com</a>
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# The Chat

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